2017 COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT





# IT'S ALL ABOUT LIFE





FOUR A'S

ALASKAN AIDS ASSISTANCE ASSOCIATION



# A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & BOARD PRESIDENT

Since its founding in 1985, Four A's has evolved into a large community of compassionate and generous supporters determined to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Over the years we have made great strides on this daunting challenge. While we have gained considerable forward momentum, we are facing other unforeseen challenges. In both the state and federal political arenas, there is uncertainty regarding the direction of funding as well as concern over social acceptance across a broad spectrum

of core moral beliefs. In addition, many people, particularly a younger generation, have become complacent and believe the worst of the epidemic is behind us.

Given this scenario, Four A's remains committed to compassionate care for those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS in Alaska. As a single point of entry for people affected by HIV/AIDS, Four A's offers client-centered services that address the unique challenges of each individual. Still, given the ever-changing environment, we realize these evolving circumstances require a new commitment to tackling the issues faced by those at-risk for HIV and those living with HIV. To do so, in February of this year, Four A's Board of Directors approved a new mission statement "To support and empower people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS and to work toward the elimination of HIV infection and its stigma in all Alaskan communities." Working together, board and staff also developed a new strategic plan for 2017 – 2020.

Four A's strategic plan focuses on: continuing a holistic approach to providing supportive services to those living with HIV; increasing client input and participation in the work of Four A's; preventing new cases of HIV through HIV education, outreach, and testing; preventing HIV, Hepatitis C, and other infectious diseases through continued growth of Four A's Syringe Access Program (FASAP); partnering with other organizations to leverage resources and expertise; exploring social entrepreneurial ventures to increase unrestricted funds; implementing a sustainable fundraising plan; and using our data bases to assess what our clients need to strengthen services and measure results. We believe Four A's strategic model and mission is founded on more than 32 years of success and will ensure our clients and community receive the best care, services, and information.

Continually focusing beyond the horizon, we also recognize that eliminating the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS and encouraging everyone to know their HIV status are critical steps in this process, but equally important is the need to simultaneously remind our community that the fight to end AIDS has not yet been won. Thanks to your unwavering support, Four A's is able to do just that.

On behalf of the clients we serve, and the staff and board of Four A's, we make a heartfelt attempt to express our gratitude and recount the invaluable services of which our clients benefit due to your caring and contributions. Most importantly, we hope this 2017 Community Impact Report serves as a testament to how likeminded individuals working together for a common cause can indeed change the world and save lives.

#### THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY AND SUPPORT

KYLE GRIFFITH
Board President (left)

HEATHER DAVIS
Executive Director (right)

Huther Davis

# CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

A Four A's client was diagnosed with HIV in 2001. At that time, his HIV diagnosis was one of many immense difficulties he faced. He came from a life of hardship: abuse, neglect, and personal adversity. After his diagnosis, he became very ill. Convinced he had full blown AIDS, he retreated to despair. He shuttered slightly recalling a moment lying on the floor in a near death state, no one by his side; "I was so scared...scared to die alone." It was after that day that he knew he needed a helping hand. When he first came to Four A's he was incredibly sick. In addition to his health concerns, his living situation was not only unstable, but unsafe. In those days he had no hope for recovery, no hope for himself. But, hope was not lost.

Through the dedication of this client and his diligent case manager, he discovered that in addition to his HIV, he had a rare genetic condition that was causing many of his negative health issues. He immediately started on a treatment for this condition, and his health and spirits improved beyond anything one could hope for. Once one of Four A's most critical clients, today he is filled with a sense of hope and joy, a sense that he brings every time he visits Four A's. As a result of his never giving up, today he is not only surviving, but thriving. Twice a week he comes into Four A's to volunteer; he helps distribute condoms, writes thank you letters, and packages cottons for the syringe exchange. This fall, this special Four A's client celebrated another major success. After many years of bouncing between various group homes, he celebrated moving into his very own apartment. Asked how he liked the place he beamed, "It's great! It's my place, I love it!" Today he enjoys relaxing at home, walking outside, and volunteering with Four A's.

Thanks to your support, and all of us working together, he enjoys every day of his life.

# FINANCIAL STATS

#### REVENUE COMPARISON

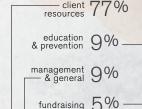
FY**17** \$1,846,438

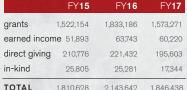
FY**16** \$2,143,642

FY15 \$1,810,628

REVENUE SOURCES

#### FY17 EXPENSES









# CLIENT RESOURCES

In the early 1980's, news spread fast and reports poured in of an apparently new and previously undiagnosed condition. Soon AIDS was given a name, and HIV identified as the cause. With this new epidemic came a flood of fear, discrimination, marginalization of people living with HIV/AIDS, and misinformation about the disease. Many credit a courageous young boy in rural Indiana named Ryan White, who contracted HIV through a blood transfusion, with helping to turn the tide of public opinion across the country about the disease and bringing attention to the plight of so many who faced persecution. His story grabbed headlines across the country; amidst this new wave of awareness, President Ronald Reagan finally mentioned AIDS publicly for the first time.

Today at the Four A's, we continue the work of Ryan and countless others like him. Our experienced case managers work with clients every day to understand how health care decisions can affect the treatment of the disease, what resources are available to them, and help them to access much needed supportive services. Case managers help our clients with transportation to doctor's offices, filling out applications for medical insurance, understanding housing options, and making referrals to mental health and substance abuse counseling. Case managers often attend doctor's appointments, housing placement meetings, and other appointments in order to help clients fully understand what is being said, to be an advocate for them, and to let them know that they are not fighting this disease on their own.

Many things have changed in the world of HIV/AIDS since the beginning of the epidemic. There are more resources that can be offered to support our clients, and scientists and doctors continue to learn more every year. Especially exciting is new research that shows that when a patient has a viral load at undetectable levels, HIV can NOT be transmitted. This kind of research helps guide the focus of Four A's case managers towards doing everything we can to support clients in getting into care and remaining in care.

Beyond direct support, our case managers work toward the elimination of the stigma and discrimination that still surrounds HIV/AIDS. We know that stigma has reduced since the 1980's, but we also see that there is a long way to go. Stigma affects people's access to proper medicacre, housing, jobs, social connections, and family relationships. When we advocate to reduce the stigma of HIV/AIDS, we advocate for a better and healthier community. It is what Four A's case managers work toward every day.

It is because of Four A's that I have the resources to take care of myself.

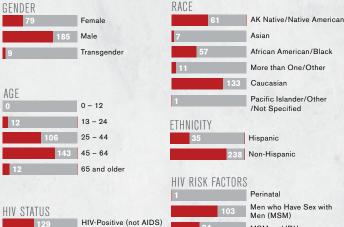
+ FOUR A'S CHENT

# MISSION MOMENT

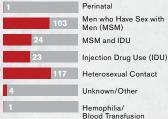
Rachel, an unassuming quiet woman has spent many years with Four A's. In fact, this year marks 35 years Rachel has lived with HIV. Rachel's path has not been easy, but life is looking up. After many years, and diligent adherence to medical care and case management, Rachel is healthy. Today her CD4 count is high and her viral load is undetectable. Nearly 60 years of age, Rachel feels like she has a new chance at life, a life lived beyond HIV.



#### CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS BY #0F CLIENTS



# 129 HIV-Positive (not AIDS) 105 CDC-Defined AIDS HIV-Positive (AIDS status unknown)



#### SUPPORT SERVICES

In FY17, Four A's distributed

91,807LBS of food to our clients through our food pantry



of clients have been assisted with housing.



of clients feel their quality of life has improved after accessing Four A's services.



of clients say their case manager supports them in achieving their goals.



of clients feel satisfied with Four A's service.

# HIV PREVENTION KEEPING PEOPLE HEALTHY AND SAFE

Four A's takes pride in its multi-faceted approach to help stop the spread of HIV and Hepatitis C in Alaska. Services like rapid HIV and Hepatitis C testing, condom distribution, HIV prevention outreach and education, Four A's Syringe Access Program (FASAP), and the Anchorage Men's Program (AMP) make the Four A's prevention program successful and unique.

Four A's offers prevention services through its Anchorage and Juneau offices. In partnership with a variety of community agencies, Four A's staff reaches those populations at highest risk for HIV including men that have sex with men (MSM), high-risk heterosexuals (HRH), and injection drug users (IDUs). Four A's believes that empowering individuals with education and choice is key to helping people limit their risks and reduce harm.

Each confidential rapid HIV and Hepatitis C test is accompanied by a counseling session and risk reduction plan tailored to the individual and their circumstances. Four A's statewide condom distribution to local bars, clubs, health clinics, shelters, school programs, and other non-profit agencies is an important and easy way to limit HIV transmission. Outreach activities to various locations in Anchorage and Juneau help educate community members on topics related to HIV, safer sex techniques, and the benefits of syringe services programs. AMP continues to be an important resource for its members and has led to many positive outreach activities as members encourage friends to get tested and practice safer sex.

As the opioid crisis continues in the United States and Alaska, FASAP has become an indispensable public health tool for reducing new HIV and Hepatitis C infections. FASAP not only provides clean syringes and supplies, but educates clients on harm reduction techniques. New this year, Four A's joined Project HOPE, the State of Alaska program that distributes Narcan kits. Staff dispense kits and educate FASAP clients in an effort to limit overdose-related deaths.

Four A's prevention program measures success by every person that is educated, tested, referred, or all the above. This success begins with a non-judgmental and open conversation when someone that walks through our doors.



#### HIV TESTING PROGRAM SURVEY

# 100%

- Agreed their tester assisted them in developing a realistic plan to reduce their risk of contracting or spreading HIV.
- Utilized resources or gained knowledge of healthier behaviors.
- Agreed they were treated with respect and felt supported when coming in for an HIV test.
- Agreed Four A's HIV testing program improved their quality of life.

# In TOTAL NUMBER

HIV rapid tests given: 809 (Anchorage and Juneau combined)

Hepatitis C rapid tests given: 121 (Anchorage only)

NUMBER Sterile syringes given out: 630,884 (Anchorage and Juneau combined)

Used needles returned: 701,197 (Anchorage and Juneau combined)

Condoms distributed: 90,000+ (Statewide)

#### FOUR A'S SYRINGE ACCESS PROGRAM (FASAP) SURVEY



of clients feel FASAP improved their quality of life.



of clients feel their knowledge of HIV, Hepatitis C, and healthier behaviors increased because of the FASAP.



of clients feel they are treated with respect and feel supported at the syringe exchange.



of clients have utilized resources or used knowledge obtained from staff.

At the lowest point in my life, Four A's was there with me.
- FOUR A'S CLIENT

## MISSION MOMENT

Sara came into Four A's to get tested for HIV and Hepatitis C (HCV). She wasn't an injection drug user and was monogamous with her longtime boyfriend. Still, Sara had some serious concerns that she may have been exposed. During the counseling session, Sara was hesitant to share what her concerns were, especially considering she was at low risk of being infected. After a few minutes of casual conversation, she asked why people were coming into the office, getting bags, and leaving. Staff explained what the syringe exchange was and why it was important. That conversation broke the ice. Sara disclosed that her boyfriend used to be an addict and she thought he was using again. After a long discussion, Sara left feeling confident enough to ask him to wear protection during sex and to eventually bring up her concerns that he was using. About a month later Sara came back in with her boyfriend, Jake. This time, both were getting testing and Jake utilized the syringe exchange for the first time.

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I gave to Four A's today because during the most difficult 20 minutes of my life, waiting for that HIV test result, I was treated with dignity and respect. I am honored to give to a program that does such good in our community.

## DEVELOPMENT

Your support helped Four A's make a difference. From the 809 people who received free HIV tests, to the many clients who needed help paying for critical medications, to all the syringe exchange participants who were greeted with kindness and warmth: You helped us make a difference in every one of these lives! Thank you for your generosity and support.

In 2017, we celebrated together at the Carnival of Kink, Four A's annual Fetish Ball extravaganza. This event generated \$14,000 for HIV prevention and client services. In September, you danced with the Diva's at Femme Fatale held in beautiful downtown Juneau. This fundraiser for Southeast services raised \$11,200 for our clients spread from Skagway to Ketchikan. You stood with Four A's and other community members at our World AIDS Day candlelight ceremony, honoring and remembering those lost to HIV/AIDS over the course of the epidemic. You joined us as we marched at PrideFest in support of our LGBTQ family and friends. Hundreds of you joined us last April to make "one meal meaningful" during Dining Out For Life. In a difficult time, your volunteerism and financial contributions ensured that the Four A's Syringe Access Program (FASAP) could continue to provide sterile syringes to those dealing with addiction. You brought warm soup and bread that fed a client who struggled to access healthy food.

Throughout the year you have contributed to all these, and so many more incredible moments. It is your contributions, your gift of time, your willingness to stand with Four A's that provides comfort, health, and hope to some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

It is donors, volunteers, and partners like you that make everything we do possible. Thank you.



#### PHILANTHROPISTS OF THE YEAR

#### Chris Terry and Bob Hancock

After moving here from Vermont three years ago, Chris Terry and Bob Hancock became dedicated donors to Four A's, committing funds to support Four A's broad range of programs. Both Chris and Bob are teachers in our community, working at Nunaka Valley Elementary School. They first engaged with Four A's though their son Jamez as he acted in both the prevention and development positions. Jamez said, "they are people who have strongly valued philanthropy throughout their lives, and are always invested in building stronger communities and meeting needs where they can."

Their first major gift to Four A's was specifically for the purchase of Hepatitis C test kits at a time when funds for the test kits were no longer available. Their gift allowed Four A's to continue offering tests until another sustainable source of support for Hepatitis C testing could be found. Chris and Bob are strong supporters of the Four A's Syringe Access Program (FASAP) and all it provides for injection drug users, and Bob has shared the gift of music by playing his violin at a special client holiday lunch and at World AIDS Day two years ago.

Together, Chris and Bob continue to honor their commitment to Four A's for the good work we can accomplish together in supporting our clients and community members.



## MISSION MOMENT

Erik had been using the exchange for about 6 months. During previous visits, he talked to staff about his addiction and the shame he felt about it. Erik had been struggling with addiction to prescribed pain medication for about 3 years. When his doctor would no longer prescribe the medication to him, Erik turned to injecting heroin. "I don't blame my doctor. He's right, I shouldn't be on them anymore". Erik disclosed to staff that no one knew about his addiction and he had cut himself off from his friends and family. Staff referred Erik to some websites about "coming out" as an addict. Several months later, Erik told staff that he had written a letter to his family and friends disclosing his secret. Now, Erik vists his family regularly and they support him emotionally. Although they have agreed to not support his addiction, Erik's parents donate to FASAP regularly to show their support for harm reduction services.



# OUR VOLUNTEERS

# MAKE IT POSSIBLE To our incredible volunteers that give so much of their time and spirit: Thank you! You are the helping hands of our mission.

In 2017, 148 volunteers gave over 2,000 hours of their time. Volunteers served the Four A's in a variety of ways, and it is thanks to their involvement we continued to meet our mission.

Volunteers acted as members of Four A's Board of Directors, helped serve "Friday Lunch" to clients, worked in the syringe exchange providing injection drug users with nonjudgmental support and supplies, and sat at the front desk greeting clients with a smile and helpful information. Many volunteers made our special events happen. They set up karaoke at our annual spring client party Break Up, Break Out, performed at Femme Fatale, collected donations at Fetish Ball, and were ambassadors at our Dining Out For Life restaurants, Other volunteers hosted activities, such as working with clients to tie-dye their own t-shirts or leading clients on a walk along Westchester Lagoon that gave clients the opportunity to express themselves in a safe, judgement free environment.

Our volunteers have done all this and so much more. Thank you for giving of yourself and your time with Four A's.

I started with Four A's because I believe in the mission. I continue to volunteer because I feel like I truly am part of something that is making a difference.



## BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT HOPF McGRATTY

I joined the board of Four A's in the summer of 2016. I had interacted professionally with the Four A's organization for years through my work as a physician assistant at Alaska Infectious Disease Management Group and at Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center prior to that. I respected the role Four A's plays in our community and I wanted to increase my part in serving those living with, and affected by,

Since joining the board I have come to have an even greater respect for Four A's staff and clients. Each staff member is dedicated to the mission of Four A's and I am a witness to this on a daily basis. The people I have met through Four A's, including clients, staff, fellow board members, donors, and volunteers have been an inspiration to me both as a health care provider and a member of my community.

It is an honor to be a member of the Four A's organization. Increasing resources to all members of our community is a personal mission of mine. Everyone should feel empowered to reach their potential and live a life in which they feel supported, safe, and cared for. Four A's helps make this possible and I am proud to be a part of the solution.



- SYRINGE FXCHANGE VOLUNTEER

#### VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR Zane Davis

Zane Davis has been a dedicated volunteer with Four A's over the last year and a half, committing over 500 hours. He is a pre-med student at UAA majoring in biology and got involved with Four A's because, "I really care about preventing disease in communities that are sometimes stigmatized by the medical establishment, such as IV drug users and queer or transgender people."

"Volunteering here at the syringe exchange is my favorite part of the week - I get to interact with people from all walks of life, discuss harm reduction practices, and try to help out in whatever small ways that I can."

Outside of Four A's, Zane volunteers with the LGBT center, works in the Providence Emergency Department as a medical scribe, and is kept busy with his demanding school schedule. Upon graduation Zane hopes to enter residency to become a primary care physician, a psychiatrist, or an addiction medicine specialist.

#### THANK YOU TO OUR 2017 FRIDAY LUNCH SPONSORS:

Anchorage Unitarian Universalists Fellowship

Albert Fogel

Bear Tooth Theater & Pub

Beth Saltonstall

Chris Iones

Colin Palmer

Derek Johnson

First Congregational Church

Four A's Board of Directors

Four A's Staff

Great Land Infusion Pharmacy

Heather Davis

Imperial Court of All Alaska

Jamez Terry

Maureen Suttman

Michael Mraz

One Result

Robin Lutz

Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish

Sheila Arkell

Teresa Nelson

Trevor Storrs

# CLIENT STORIES & QUOTES

Four A's stood by me, when no one else would.

Ben came to Four A's three years ago. At the time Ben was greatly impaired by HIV-associated dementia. Ben was often very confused, frustrated, and scared. His daughter and caretaker were becoming increasingly concerned about Ben's health. After months of support and assistance with medical care and treatment from his case manager, Ben's condition slowly but surely began to improve. Thanks to the help Ben received from his family and his Four A's case manager, Ben is now thriving independently. Ben gets himself to doctors' appointments, stays on top of his HIV treatments, and, always pays attention to the latest fishing reports.



It was positive. I don't know what's going to happen next, but I do feel glad to know. And I have a resource for help, thanks to Four A's.



Jason recently came out as gay to one of his closest friends. At 35, he considered himself straight and had always "hidden" that part of himself so that he did not have to face that he was sexually attracted to men. For the past 10 years Jason had been having sex with men, mostly unprotected and never once asked the HIV or STI status of his sexual partners. After coming out of the closet and feeling more liberated. Jason decided it was time to get tested for HIV. With his friend tagging along for emotional support, Jason came to the Four A's, Jason disclosed to the HIV tester that he knew little to nothing about HIV or how it was transmitted. He said his lack of knowledge was primarily because he was affraid to read about, or even acknowledge, that he was at very high risk for infection. This proved accurate as the tester began answering questions that Jason had, thus educating him on the topic. By the time the counseling and testing session was over, Jason no longer believed several of the misconceptions about how HIV is transmitted such as through saliva or from a toilet seat. Jason's preliminary HIV test was non-reactive. The relief was apparent on his face after the results were given. Jason stated that his experience was another step to becoming a happier and healthier person. He plans to visit every three months for his regular HIV test and to get condoms and lube.

Fifteen years ago, Pete dropped everything and moved to Alaska, chasing a girl. Pete landed in Southeast Alaska and while the relationship didn't fare well, Pete would come to be enamored with the stunning Alaska landscape and its people. Over the years Pete began to struggle. He became addicted to illicit drugs, lost his job, and was running out of options. Knowing something needed to be done, Pete flew to Anchorage and went directly to Four A's. As a man living with HIV, Pete arrived just in time to take part in Four A's men's retreat and promptly joined the group. For the first two days all Pete could do was lay in bed; many there tried to revive Pete from his funk. Pete would later describe this as the lowest point in his life. Over the next few days, with the help of his peers, Pete began to partake in activates, tell his story, and generally started to feel better. Upon the conclusion of the men's retreat, Pete returned to his home feeling renewed. Since then he has remained sober, has a great stable job, and is doing very well.

I'm thankful that you guys are here and offer this. It's not something I would wish on anyone - being addicted - but at least we have a place we can go and actually feel wanted.

- JINSH FASAP PARTICIPANT

Jason and Mike would always come into the exchange together. One week, FASAP staff noticed that Mike was no longer coming in with Jason. Staff asked Jason what happened to his friend. Jason didn't know and expressed concern that something might have happened to him. For Jason, there were three possibilities for his friend: he was in jail, he got into treatment, or he overdosed somewhere and died. Weeks went by and one-day Jason showed up with his friend Mike in tow. Mike said he had heard we were asking about him and he wanted to drop by. Mike was one month sober and thanked Four A's for helping him until he was ready to get clean. "Four A's willingness to help me, inspired me to help myself."

- Mike, Past FASAP Participant

In tears, I just can't thank Four A's enough for having this service, for listening to me, and just for being here. I thought for sure I would be positive and now I know how to protect myself and my partner. Thank you, thank you for being here.

– HIV TEST RECIPIENT



# DONORS

#### PATRONS (\$10,000+)

AIDS United

Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

Comer Family Foundation
United Way of Anchorage

# LEADERS (\$5K-\$9.9K)

Broadway Cares Corbett Mothe Credit Union 1

Member Donations Four A's Syringe

Access Participant

Donations - Anchorage

Middlecott Foundation Nordstrom Cares

Pride Foundation

Table 6 & Haute Quarter

Table 6 & Haute Quarter Grill - Alex & Lynn Perez

#### PARTNERS (\$1K-\$4.9K)

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Anonymous
Candace Bell
Christopher J. Taylor
David Sutton
Great Land Infusion

Pharmacy Heather Davis

International Association of

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The Carr Foundation
Turkey Red
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Southeast Alaska
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# FRIENDS (\$500-\$999)

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Albert Fogle Anonymous Ben Masters Chris Terry & Bob Hancock Cynder Grav

Dan Seiser & Mark Bell

David Kasser Dean Nelson &

Rhonda Roberts Derek Johnston

Dr. Benjamin Westley

Heather & Josh Harris
Jamez Terry

John Pepe

Judy Caminer Larry Jones

Laurie Gregory & Griffith Steiner

Mara Carnahan Mark Rhodes

Mexico in Alaska Mike Moora

# VISIONARIES (\$100-\$499)

2 Friends Gallery

Nick Whitmore

Princess Tours

Robin Lutz

Rick Miller & April Arnett

Shades of Opulence

Teddy & Cindy Michel

The Rendezvous & The

Rockwell - Deb Percy

Susan Orlansky &

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Aaren MacKenzie Aaron O'Ouinn Abby O'Brien Abigail Wright & Carl Pohiola Adventure Bound Alaska Aisha Barnes Alaska Advanced Dentistry Alaska Dames Alaska Knifeworks Alaska Railroad Corporation Alaskan Brewing Company Alfred Perkins Allison Brandt & Fred Dunlap Amy Ryder Anchorage Lodge No. 1534 Anchorage Unitarian Universalists Fellowship Angela Dunn Ann Jache Annette Hewitt Annie Kaill's Anthony & Jan Reece ASD Charitable Giving Campaign Barbara Brink &

Heather O'Brien

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Cara, Davin & Ruari
O'Brien-Holen
Carol Johnson

Cara, Davin & Ruari
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Hanger on the Wharf Henry Dorsch

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Matt & Nate Allen Maureen Suttman

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Angeline Ebnet

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